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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 06430 281115Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 6430

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, IV
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: COUNTRY ACTION PLAN FOR IVORY COAST

REF: STATE 145614

1. EMBASSY FINDS DRAFT REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN IVORY COAST GENERALLY ACCURATE AND PERCEPTIVE. WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS IVORY COAST'S RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS AS GOOD AS ANY IN AFRICA -- OR INDEED ANYWHERE OUTSIDE THE WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES. AT THE SAME TIME, WHILE CONTINUING TO ADVOCATE "DIALOGUE" RATHER THAN FORCE IN THE RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS, IVORY COAST HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN CIRCUMSPECT IN SEEKING TO "EXPORT" ITS OWN VALUES. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT HOUPHOUET MAY BE PREPARED TO SPEAK MORE FORECEFULLY ABOUT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ELSEWHERE, THOUGH THIS MAY BE IN THE CONTEXT OF REBUTTALS AGAINST ATTACKS ON IVORY COAST BY AFRICAN RADICALS. NEVERTHELESS, IVORY COAST IS A MEMBER OF THE THIRD WORLD AND WILL BALANCE ITS POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AGAINST DESIRE TO MAINTAIN THIRD WORLD SOLIDARITY.

2. IN PARA 2C REFTEL (DEMOCRATIC PROCESS), LAST SENTENCE MIGHT BE REPLACED AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE: THERE ARE NO CON-
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STITUTIONAL OR LEGAL RESTRICTIONS AGAINST OPPOSITION PARTIES, BUT THEY DO NOT EXIST AND THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OR NO ORGANIZED POLITICAL OPPOSITION SINCE INDEPENDENCE. THERE IS SOME LIMITED OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL DEBATE IN PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATING CANDIDATES TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. END QUOTE.

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3. IN PARA 3C (CORRUPTION) LAST SENTENCE MIGHT BE REPLACED BY: QUOTE: MOST RECENTLY, IN SPRING OF 1977, THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS THAT FAIRLY SERVERE RICE SHORTAGE MAY IN PART HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY LARGE-SCALE DIVERSIONS AT HIGH LEVELS. SEVERAL OTHER APPARENTLY WELL-DOCUMENTED ACCOUNTS OF HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION HAVE BEEN REPORTEDLY BROUGHT TO HOUPHOUET'S ATTENTION. STIFF ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATION WAS PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JUNE 1977, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT SEVERAL CABINET MINISTERS WILL LOSE THEIR PORTFOLIOS AS A RESULT OF CORRUPTION CHARGES. END QUOTE.
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